AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 5, as follows:

In the present embodiment, during the booted state of the printer driver, the information on the printer 20 is acquired and stored at predetermined time intervals by the utility software and new information is reflected in the printer driver, so that an operator can accurately grasp the state of the printer 20. In relation to this, Fig. 5 is a flowchart illustrating printer information acquiring process. When the printer driver is booted up at the request of printing, it is first checked in step S21 as to whether or not the utility software is operated. If the result is affirmative, the routine jumps to step S25; otherwise, if the result is negative, the routine proceeds to step S22. In step S22, the utility software is booted up. Next, in step S23, various kinds of information on the printer 20 and the optional devices connected to the printer 20 are acquired by means of the utility software. Furthermore, in step S24, the acquired information is filed in a text format. In step S25, the text file stored in the PC 30 by the utility software is read.

Please amend paragraph that bridges page 11 and 12 as follows:

Subsequently, in step S26, setting items to be prohibited on the setting screen of the printer driver are determined based on the acquired information on the printer. Examples of the setting items to be prohibited include "double-sided printing" in the state in which the double-sided printing unit 11 (see Fig. 1) is not connected to the printer 20, or "Staple" or "Punch" in the state in which the finisher 12 is not disposed. The process of determining the setting items to be prohibited will be described later in reference to Fig. 9. In step S27, the acquired information on the printer and the determination result in step S26 are reflected in the printer driver. In this case, the items determined in step S26 as the setting items to be prohibited are grayed out (or shaded) in such a manner as to be disabled from being selected. Otherwise, in order to disable the setting items to be prohibited from being selected, such items may be deleted from a menu of choices.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 14, as follows:

The printer information acquiring process is executed based on an operating program installed on the PC 30. In the present embodiment, the program is stored in a storage device such as a hard disk drive 30c (see Fig. 2) ~~(not shown)~~ in the PC 30. Such a program can be installed on the storage device using a computer-readable floppy disk 30a (see Fig. 2) and a CD-ROM.

Please amend paragraph the paragraph that bridges page 13 and 14 as follows:

Additionally, on the printer body information display section 62 is displayed a table 62d showing the remaining number of sheets different in size or orientation, stacked in the first to fourth trays 9A to 9D in the printer 20. In Fig. 6, the table 62d shows that "Tray 3" corresponding to the third tray 9C is "Empty," and therefore, it is found that the sheets stacked in the third tray 9C in the printer 20 are used up. Fig. 7 illustrates the state in which the result determined in step S26 of Fig. 5 is reflected based on the sheet-out information. In Fig. 7, a box of the item "Sheet Selection" is opened in the condition setter 63. In this box, symbols "A4T," "A4Y," "A3T" and "A4" indicating the sizes and orientations of the sheets respectively corresponding to the first to fourth trays 9A to 9D in the printer 20 are arranged in order from top. Among these symbols, the symbol "A3T" is determined to be a setting item to be prohibited based on the sheet-out information on the third tray 9C, so that the symbol "A3T" is grayed out, i.e., cannot be selected. Consequently, the operator cannot select, on the printer driver, the symbol "A3T" indicating the sheet-out condition on the printer 20. Therefore, it is possible to avoid any change in finish or any discard of job data because the printer 20 and its optional devices cannot cope with the job data transmitted from the PC 30.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 16, line 7 as follows:

As described above, according to the present ~~invention~~ embodiment, the information on the printer 20 and its optional devices connected to the printer 20 is acquired at predetermined time intervals, and then, the setting conditions in the printer driver are automatically updated based on the information, so that the operator can accurately grasp the states of the printer 20 and its optional devices. Furthermore, the operator can previously check as to whether or not a desired finish can be obtained. In the case where it is found that no desired finish can be obtained, it is possible to avoid any change in finish or any discard of the job data by, for example, varying the size of sheets stacked in each of the trays 9A to 9D or supplementing the sheets or the toner in advance. As a result, the job data which can be coped with by the printer 20 and its optional devices can be transmitted all the time, thereby efficiently achieving the printing operation.

Please amend the paragraph that bridges pages 16 to 18 as follows:

Fig. 9 is a flowchart illustrating the process of determining the setting items to be prohibited (step S26 of Fig. 5). In the process of determining the setting items to be prohibited, it is first determined in step S31 as to whether or not there are sheets in the first tray 9A in the printer 20. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S33; in contrast, if the result is negative, the sheet size of the first tray 9A in the item "Sheet Selection" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S32, and then, the routine proceeds to step S33. In step S33, it is determined as to whether or not there are sheets in the second tray 9B in the printer 20. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S35; in contrast, if the result is negative, the sheet size of the second tray 9B in the item "Sheet Selection" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S34, and then, the routine proceeds to step S35. Subsequently, in step S35, it is determined as to whether or not there are sheets in the third tray 9C in the printer 20. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S37; in contrast, if the result is negative, the sheet size of the third tray 9C in the item "Sheet Selection" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S36, and then, the routine proceeds to step S37. Furthermore, in step S37, it is determined as to whether or not there are sheets in the fourth tray 9D in the printer 20. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S39; in contrast, if the result is negative, the sheet size of the fourth tray 9D in the item "Sheet Selection" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S38, and then, the routine proceeds to step S39.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 2 as follows:

In step S39, it is determined as to whether or not the double-sided printing unit 11 is disposed in the printer body. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S41; in contrast, if the result is negative, the item "Printing Side" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S40, and then, the routine proceeds to step S41. In this case, the item "Printing Side" is automatically set to "Single Side." Subsequently, it is determined in step S41 as to whether or not the finisher 12 is connected to the printer body. If the result is affirmative, the routine proceeds directly to step S43; in contrast, if the result is negative, the items "Punch" and "Staple" are designated as the setting items to be prohibited in step S42, and then, the routine proceeds to step S43. In step S43, it is determined as to whether or not there are staples. If the result is affirmative, the routine is returned to the main routine illustrated in Fig. 5; in contrast, if the result is negative, the item "Staple" is designated as the setting item to be prohibited in step S44, and then, the routine is returned to the main routine illustrated in Fig. 5.

Please amend the paragraph that bridges pages 18 and 19 as follows:

Moreover, Fig. 10 is a flowchart illustrating the process of reflecting the printer information in the driver display (step S27 of Fig. 5). In this reflecting process, first in step S51, the items designated as the setting items to be prohibited are grayed out, and therefore, cannot be selected. Next, in step S52, the items not designated as the setting items to be prohibited are normally displayed, and therefore, can be selected. Upon completion of this process, the routine is returned to the main routine illustrated in Fig. 5.